(b) The basic design feature of an aircraft cannot be changed in an effort to extend its life, especially in ageing aircraft. However, a number of steps have been taken to improve the design features of vital aircraft components. The manufacturers and other agencies are also associated for the purpose.

Further a High Powered Committee constituted by the Government under the Chairmanship of Scientific Advisor to Raksha Mantri has also reviewed the entire accident scenario and has interalia made recommendations to improve upon the design features.

Inter Continental Ballistic Missile

752. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India propose to develop Inter Continental Ballistic Missile with a range of 3000 Km and above; and

(b) if so, the target set for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Firing by Pakistan

753. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of times Pakistan resorted to unprovoked firing across Indo-Pak border and the Line of Actual Control during the last six months;

(b) the number of soldiers and civilians killed and injured in these incidents; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to ensure that this firing is stopped?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Details of firing incidents and casualties suffered along the Line of Control and International Border (IB) portion of Indo-Pak border in J&K during the past six months (01 November 1997 to 30 April 1998) are as follows:—

	No. of incidents	Army		BSF		Civilians	
		K	W	K	W	K	W
Line of control	859	5	28	1	—	—	2
IB	168	—	1	—	5	—	9

(K = killed, W= Wounded)

2. Appropriate response is given by our troops to the firing of Pakistani troops, taking due care that the incidents remain localised and our casualties are minimal.

3. There has been no firing incident along the International Border in Punjab, Rajasthan & Gujarat during the last 6 months.

Disposal of quarters of Contonment Board, Agra

754. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Director General (Contonments) had sought the opinion of Contonment Board, Agra to dispose of Shakti nagar Colony quarters to its occupants and a resolution No. VI, dated 30.9.1989 amended on 20.12.1989 was passed by the Contonment Board, Agra to sell these quarters to its present occupants; and

(b) if so, what steps have so far been taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) A proposal from Director General Defence Estates is pending before Government for disposal of Shakti Nagar Colony quarters. It is under consideration.

Modernisation of Armed Forces

755. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for casting off flab and adding the muscle to our armed

forces by reducing its numerical strength by about 50,000 and modernising/equipping them with latest sophisticated weapons;

(b) if so, the details of the plan and the cost likely to be incurred thereon; and

(c) the steps taken and being taken in pursuance thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) The Army has planned under posting 50,000 personnel in a phased manner by 31 March, 1999. This will not result in any retrenchment or reduction in combat potential. The savings achieved will be utilised for the modernisation programmes of the Army and for improvement in the quality of life of the troops.

Fundamental Rights of Armed Forces Personnel

756. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Armed Forces personnel have to content with large scale abridgement of their fundamental rights granted to citizens of India under various provisions of the Constitution of India;

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) how and to what extent such abridgement of their fundamental rights is compensated?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Armed Forces personnel in Army, Navy and Air Force are governed by Army Act 1950, Navy Act 1957 and Air Force Act 1950 duly approved by the Parliament. Article 33 of the Constitution of India empowers Parliament to modify the fundamental rights in their application to the members of the Armed Forces so as to ensure proper discharge of their duties and the maintenance of discipline among them.

Indian accusations against China

757. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state the purpose of Government want to serve by hurling accusations against China when the country is in need of maintaining good relations with the neighbouring country?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): Government have made no accusations against China but have only expressed India's security concerns. Government is committed to building a friendly, co-operative, good neighbourly, and mutually beneficial relationship with China.

Crash of MIG-21 aircraft at Pathankot

758. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a MIG-21 IAF aircraft recently crashed into the shopping complex in Pathankot district killing some persons;

(b) if so, the details of the inquiry conducted by Government into the MIG-21 crash; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government in this matter?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) On 12 May 1998, a MIG-21 IAF aircraft crashed in a locality during take off from Pathankot airfield. In the accident two persons were fatally injured and two were seriously injured.

(b) and (c) A Court of inquiry into the accident has been ordered and is in progress.

Construction of Helipad by China

759. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether China has constructed a Helipad in Arunachal Pradesh and there are continuous incidents of incursions by Chinese Army personnel as reported in the press;

(b) if so, how many incursions have taken place during the last five years and what steps have been taken to counter them;

(c) whether matters relating to demarcation of actual line of control have been taken up with the visiting Chinese Chief of Army Staff; and

(d) what is the stage of threat perception created by Chinese Army deployed on Indo-China borders and whether this has been reduced as per the agreement?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) There are no reports of alleged construction of helipads by